

566 land fiefs in conquered territory, and he was, as special
 163 favor, permitted to wear the long cotton shirt, "qāmīa"
 under the common shamma (toga), and over the old style nar-
 [292] rowing kneepants; cotton jodphurs and sandals remained the
 prerogative of feudal lords. Most of the skilled crafts-
 men never rose that high but spent their lives accompany-
 ing troops as tentmakers, carpenters, smiths, horn cup
 fashioners, tanners, or, at best, as silversmiths and em-
 broiderers of harness and saddle coverings for feudal chiefs.

181 The material culture of the Amhara (still continuing
 183 among the rural Amhara) is therefore a composite of the
 566 equipment of the settled peasant and of the formerly itiner-
 176 ant feudal lord and his troop of soldier-retainers and
 specialists (many of the latter from socially inferior eth-
 [754] nic groups). Moreover, the settled peasant feared not only
 the actual "evil eye" of the rapacious warlord, but also
 the spiritually conceived "evil eye". Both factors undoubt-
 edly contributed to the conservatism and the pattern of
 maximum utilization of natural products with a minimum of
 invention; leaving the exercise of ingenuity for other
 elaborations of culture.

1. Living Standards

A. The Rural Settlement:

621 The typical residential unit is the hamlet ("ḡis", or,
 if several on one large hill, "māndār"), rather than a vil-
 lage. The hamlet may consist of from two to a dozen huts,
 with the node about five residential huts ("tuqul"). Thus
 the hamlet is often little more than an isolated or a semi-
 isolated farmstead, though another hamlet may occupy the
 other side of the same hill.

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793 They have always been bitterly opposed to progress and to innovations, more so as regards changes in their own Church than as regards the introduction into the land of alien religions, strange to say. Thus for example a learned individual, a very religious layman whom I knew, had been accused by the priests of expounding the Gospels in a manner somewhat different to that generally accepted, and as a result he was imprisoned for three years. His views on the subject of his own Church were instructive!

793 On the other hand they are by no means so intolerant to other religious beliefs and efforts in the country; they are not fanatical, and if left alone and not interfered with are not markedly anti-foreign. Individually I have always found them quite pleasant and friendly, and I am bound to say that Mr Wylde, who met a great many of them in various parts of the country, seemed vastly to prefer them to European missionaries. But as a body I think they are—to put it mildly—an unfortunate institution, and so far as their possessions are concerned, treatment on the lines adopted by our Henry VIII would seem to be overdue.

609 Moslems, Jews, and others practise their religion in peace. I have seen religious processions of the followers of Islam on their feast days pass through the streets shouting and singing completely free from molestation, and on the occasion of my last visit I saw a mosque which was on the verge of completion being constructed in one of the principal streets of Addis Ababa.

795 It is rather remarkable that in spite of the bitter religious warfare in which they have been engaged for centuries Abyssinians should be so tolerant of their

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in the same half-interested manner in which the shepherd directs cattle by throwing stones. 121* 155 855 858

The effect of Amhara socialization, then, is to inhibit rather than to stimulate the development of individuality. The spirited and expressive Amhara child of two or three is conditioned to become, for the rest of his childhood and to a large extent throughout life, taciturn, fearful, and slightly morose. 121* 155 156 86

The traditional system of formal education is no less indifferent to the personality of the learner. The atmosphere of the schools where reading is taught is harsh and punitive. Pedagogy at all levels of instruction is based on repetition and memorization, with strict adherence to the conventions preferred by the teacher.* The traditional ban on the teaching of writing may also be related to the desire to keep the student's mind on received formulations. Amhara formal education in no wise seeks to cultivate the individual, but aims solely to prepare cultural specialists who will be able to perform the rituals and perpetuate the teachings of the Ethiopian Church. The instruction of noble children, finally, in the arts of riding, swimming, shooting, and playing the lyre has more to do with the transmission of the manners and skills appropriate to a position of high status than with a concern for personal development. 121* 155 876 155 121* 155 876 121* 868 565 554

Music and Art

Music and dance are greatly enjoyed by the Amhara, but little attention is given to the cultivation of their forms or the refinement of their performance. The music is monodic, both melodically and rhythmically, and, except for some intricately structured accelerandos in certain religious hymns, consists chiefly in the indefinite repetition of a number of very limited musical ideas. Dance forms are still more limited and repetitive. In both genres, variation and the development of personal styles are not encouraged. Innovation, particularly in religious forms, is likely to meet strong resistance; witness the vigorous rejection of Alaqa Gabra Hännä's innovations in dance by the masters at Gondar. 121* 533 535 156 [176]

Like music and dance, Amhara design provides little scope for the free play of imagination. In pottery, basketry, and even in such antique ornamentation as appears on the coins and stelae of Aksum and the churches of Lalibela, the recurring style is that of the continuous repetition of simple geometric patterns. Painting provides a richer medium, but here again individuality is carefully constricted. The subject matter of pictures is limited by tradition to scenes concerning the life of Christ and the saints, and to the *res gestae* of emperors. The manner of treatment of these themes is 121* 531 156 121* 532 156

* A partial exception to this—the teaching of *qene*—will be discussed below.